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AMERICAN SLAVERY

5.

A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE

TO THE

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

BY WILLIAM GOODELL.

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FORWARDED one hundred dollars to the Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, to be awarded as a premium for the best essay on the subject named on the title-page. A majority of the Committee of adjudication, of whom Hon. William Jay was chairman, on examining the six essays submitted, concurred in awarding the premium to the writer of this essay.

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A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE TO THE

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

THE conversion of the world is an object dear to the hearts of Christians — dear to the hearts of all holy and benevolent beings, whether on earth or in heaven. It is the object for which the Father sent his Son into the world — for which Christ came, labored, suffered, and died; the object for which he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and became “Head over all things unto the Church.” It is the object for which the Scriptures were given, the Sabbath appointed, the ordinances instituted, the ministry commissioned, and the Church organized and established.

But what *is*, or what *would* be, the conversion of the world? “The world lieth in wickedness.” Its inhabitants are “dead in trespasses and sins.” The conversion of a sinner is a change of heart, a new birth, a renunciation of sin, a new life of holy faith and good fruits. The conversion of the *world* would be the conversion of the masses of its inhabitants to the same living faith. It must be something more than the overthrow of polytheism, paganism, and all false religions, by the substitution of a mere nominal Christianity in their stead. Such a change might leave the world in moral pollution and spiritual death — its millions yet in their sins, “hateful and hating one another.” The conversion of

the world must be nothing less than the conversion of the masses of its inhabitants, and this would involve the moral renovation of SOCIETY, as well as of the *individuals* of whom society is composed. The conversion of the world will be its conversion from sin, its conversion to God, its conversion to Christ. When the world is converted to Christ, it will be governed by the principles of Christ, the precepts, the example, the spirit of Christ — the spirit of benevolence, justice, equity, mercy, brotherly kindness, and truth. The character of Christ will become, in some good measure, the character of individuals, of communities, of states, and of nations. "The kingdoms of this world" will "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," by being governed by his pure and just laws. All injustice, oppression, and violence, will then cease, or be generally suppressed. Ignorance will be dispelled. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The people shall be secure in their persons and in their possessions, enjoying the fruits of their labor. They "shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." They will be united in the bonds of a common brotherhood, and of reverence for the common Father of all.

Let us imagine, now, a state of society completely the opposite of all this. Its prominent features might naturally include, among other things, the following :

1. MAN, the image of his Maker, the price of a Saviour's blood, reduced to the condition of a chattel — a thing! *Man*, the equal of his brother man, bought, sold, held in this condition of brutality by his brother man, "reputed and adjudged in law to be a chattel personal, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever."

2. *Man*, inherited, mortgaged, sold, seized for the debts

of his pretended owner, chained, driven to the market, sold at public auction, with chattels; an article of speculation and traffic, bred and reared for the shambles.

3. *Man*, denied the family relation, the institution of marriage, the rights of husband and wife, of parents and children; separated, torn asunder, herded together, like beasts, compelled to submit to a system of concubinage, adultery, promiscuous intercourse, unutterable pollution.

4. *Man*, driven by the lash to labor without wages, forbidden the ownership of property, the power of making a valid contract, or even of stipulating with his master for self-redemption from this degraded condition.

5. *Man*, excluded by penal enactments from the light of education, and forbidden to read "the holy Scriptures;" forbidden to assemble freely for "divine worship," and for "the purpose of mental instruction."

6. *Man*, denied the protection due to a man, an outlaw from society, not accounted a member of society for the reception of any of its benefits, though subject to society for all the injuries it can inflict upon him.

Neither logic nor rhetoric, neither biblical exegesis nor theological learning, can be needed to show that *such* a condition of society must be the *reverse* of that which Christianity proposes to introduce by the conversion of the world. Yet this is the condition of society that constitutes *American Slavery*.

In other language, American Slavery, according to its own statutes, in its own acknowledged facts and features, in the distinctive characteristics which enter into its definition and nature, is seen at a glance to be irreconcilably hostile to Christianity — to the conversion of the world — to the state of society that such a conversion would introduce. The one must exclude the other. They can never coalesce, nor, in their full development, coëxist.

If sin be a transgression of the law, and if the law of God be the law of truth, equity, justice, and love, then the holding of human beings in a condition of chattelhood must be a sin against God. And if the conversion of the world to God be equivalent to its conversion from sin, then the practice of slaveholding must be abandoned in the process of converting the world, or of preparation for that event; and that practice, so long as it continues, must present a formidable obstacle to the enterprise of such a conversion.

If only a *logical proof* of this position were demanded, we might rest the argument here. No arts of sophistry can conceal the abominations of the system and the inherent sinfulness of the practice. The moral sense in man must be obliterated, before other convictions (whoever may pretend otherwise) can become prevalent. Wherever the *real facts* involved are fairly presented, all men intuitively know, and can not help knowing, their true character. The practice is seen to involve inequality, injustice, oppression, dishonesty, a violation of man's most sacred rights. Could mankind be persuaded that the Bible sanctions slaveholding, they would only be persuaded that the Bible sanctions a gigantic moral wrong—that it sanctions the very crimes which its own Decalogue forbids—and is, therefore, self-contradictory and self-condemned. But candid, impartial, and reflecting readers of the Bible will not believe this. They will see that the universal reign of Bible Christianity would abolish slaveholding, and that the continuance of such a practice must obstruct and prevent its reign.

The case seems *too plain* for a logical argument. We can only present, in detail, some of the *ways* in which slaveholding obstructs the conversion of the world. It is easy to see how,

I. *It hinders the conversion of the slaves.*

If the world is to be converted to God, then the slaves of

America are thus to be converted, for they are a part of the world.

But conversion to God involves some correct knowledge of God, and of his character and will. This requires the proper use and cultivation of the moral and intellectual powers of the soul. Christianity proposes to save and sanctify men "*through the truth.*" The word of God is the truth. This word and this truth the slave system, so far as it is not counteracted, withholds. This proper use and cultivation of the moral and intellectual powers, it labors incessantly to prevent. The statutes, the judicial decisions, (with the reasons assigned for them,) the testimony of ecclesiastical bodies in the Slave States abundantly prove this. The slaves, as a general fact, are in the condition of heathen, and must be so while the system continues. So say the Presbyterian Synods of Kentucky, of South Carolina, and Georgia. So, in effect, says Bishop Meade of Virginia. And yet these guardians of the churches are not prepared to advise the present abandonment of slaveholding. In other words, they are not ready to promote (so far as the slaves are concerned) the conversion of the world. They only *talk* of providing "*oral instruction*" for the slaves. They never propose giving them Bibles. In this, the Protestant clergy agree with the Roman Catholic priests, whom they condemn for withholding Bibles from the people under *their* control.

But let us suppose that the slave masters were all ready (as some of them are) to communicate religious instruction to their slaves. Let it even be supposed that, in doing this, they should give them Bibles and teach them to read, at the same time holding them in bondage. They would have to teach them the falsehood (which we know they do teach them) that the Bible does not condemn slaveholding, or else they would have to admit that they themselves disregard its divine teachings. In either case, their teaching would be

rendered almost useless by their practice of slaveholding. If they could convince the slaves that the Bible justifies or permits slaveholding, they would, in most cases, insure their indignant rejection of the Bible. If the slaves, on the other hand, perceived that the Bible condemns slaveholding, they would see that their teachers were urging a religion upon them which they refused to practice themselves. In either case, the example of the teachers would counteract the influence of their religious teaching, so far as they taught the truth.

The religion of the *taught* does not commonly rise higher than that of the *teacher*. And the conversion of the slaves to a slaveholding religion would not be their conversion to Christ. Neither would the conversion of the world to such a religion be the conversion of the world to Christ's religion. The world would not exhibit the spirit, nor honor the principles, nor obey the precepts, nor imitate the example of Christ. Darkness would still cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. Violence, injustice, cruelty, and impurity would still prevail.

But this is not all. The religion of Christ requires the family state, in its sacredness and purity, in order to the proper development and practice of the Christian virtues. But the family relation is abrogated by the slave system. Christianity requires the mutual duties of husband and wife, of parents and children. But slavery forbids and supercedes the practice of those duties. Christianity requires chastity and moral purity. But slavery makes no provision for these, and scarcely permits the possibility of their existence. Christianity requires its disciples to obey God rather than man. Slavery compels its victims to obey man rather than God. Christianity demands for its development the highest liberty compatible with individual security and social order. Slavery requires for its preservation the most unmitigated

despotism known under the sun. Christianity makes its disciples the freemen of the Lord. Slavery transforms them, as far as is practicable, to the chattels of oppressive men. Christianity enjoins cheerful industry, frugality, hospitality, liberality, charity, honesty, veracity, and all the social virtues. Slavery cuts the sinews of all these, in the victims of unrequited labor, and almost renders inevitable the contrary vices. There may be virtuous and pious slaves. Undoubtedly there are such. But those best qualified to judge, consider the number very small.* So far as true religion exists among them, it exists in despite of the legitimate influence of slavery, and exists in an imperfect and undeveloped state, under the greatest obstacles to healthful growth and maturity. *The conversion of the slaves, as a class, can not reasonably be expected to take place without the previous abolition of slaveholding.*

II. *Slaveholding hinders the conversion of the slaveholders.*

The practice of slaveholding is their darling sin. They must relinquish it in becoming truly conformed to God. One cherished sin is sufficient to destroy a soul, and the sin of slaveholding, even if it were comparatively a small one, could claim no exemption from the rule. But it is *not* a small sin. It comprises the elements of robbery, man-stealing, the using of a neighbor's service without wages, and the holding of the image of God in the condition of a brute. Christ declares that, in the final judgment, he will regard the treatment of the least, the most despised and degraded, as the treatment of himself. If there were times of ignorance in which this sin might be winked at, that time is not now. For a full century the emphatic testimony of the wisest and

* The most potent objection against emancipation is derived from the almost universal prevalence of vice, ignorance, and brutality among the slaves. But these are the natural effects of slavery, and can not be generally removed but by a removal of the cause.

best men of the Church has been raised against it, and the dreadful effects of the system are now more fully developed and more clearly exhibited than they ever were before, while the safety and the benefits of emancipation have now been fully proved.

The legitimate effects of the slave system upon the moral condition of the *master* can not, perhaps, on the whole, be regarded less dreadful than its effects on the *slave*. To a great extent they are intertwined together, and can not easily be separated. The absence of the family relation among the slaves affects the purity of the family relation among their masters. The unchastity of the one class is connected with the unchastity of the other. In a community where one half of the females are not expected to be chaste, and have no protection, either by law or by custom, from masters of the other sex, who hold unlimited control over them, and whose approaches, instead of being shunned as disgraceful, are commonly accounted an honor, it is idle to expect the continency of the dominant class, as a class, and no such incredible phenomenon is witnessed. Exceptions are doubtless found. But a community of young men, brought up in the idleness that naturally grows out of the slave system, and accustomed to the exercise of unlimited power over their dependents, female as well as male, will exhibit the natural consequences of their position.

The vices of the servile class, their brutality, their degradation, and their ignorance, are communicated by close contact to the dominant class, especially during the tender and susceptible period of early childhood, when in many, if not in most cases, they are committed to the care of slave nurses, and to the society of slave children, whose very language and manners they imbibe. If dishonesty be the reproach of the slave, it can not be said that those who rob them of themselves, and of their earnings, set before them an example of

Christian honesty. If uncompensated drudgery cause the servile class to *hate* labor, the pride of leisure and of dominion causes the governing class to *despise* it. So that the Christian virtue of *industry*, the ground of all the other virtues, is wanting alike in both. Sensuality, or the predominance of the animal over the spiritual nature, is the common characteristic of both. Servility, the vice of the slave, is but the inverted fac-simile of pride, the vice of his master. A change in condition would change the form of the vice. Enslave the master and make the slave a slaveholder, and their moral affinities would be apparent.

There is nothing more fatally corrupting than the habitual and long-continued exercise of irresponsible, unlimited power. Universal history attests this. The Bible gives us the philosophy of it, and the fact is proverbial and even trite.

"The whole commerce between master and slave," says Mr. Jefferson, "is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions; the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. . . . The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed and daily exercised in tyranny, can not but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved under such circumstances."

"I need say nothing," says Judge Tucker of Virginia, "of the baleful effects of slavery on our *moral character*, because I know you have been long sensible of this point."

It would be easy to multiply quotations from other slaveholders, to the same effect. The well-known ferocity, lawlessness, and insecurity of person and possession, witnessed in the Slave States, as contrasted with other communities, attest the truthfulness of such statements.

If injustice, a disregard of human rights, of the demands

of equity, and of the law of equal love to our neighbor, are opposed to the principles and the spirit of the Christian religion, and if a renunciation of these sins in our daily practice be essential to a sound Christian conversion, then the abandonment of slaveholding must be involved in the conversion of the world ; and while the practice continues, it must continue to be an obstacle to such conversion, so far as slaveholders are concerned.

III. *Slavery hinders the conversion of the free people of color.*

The statutes and customs of the Slave States, forbidding education and free religious worship to the slaves, extend, in a measure, and in most or all of those States, to the nominally free people of color. In some of the States, a parent may be severely punished for teaching his own child to read, and Bibles may not be distributed among them. Assemblies for religious worship, without the presence of a certain proportion of whites, are accounted unlawful assemblies, and may be dispersed, and the worshipers punished. In many other respects the nominally free negro or mulatto is subject to the disabilities and indignities of the enslaved. This state of things closes the door against their effectual religious instruction by the whites, the greater part of whom are their oppressors, or in sympathy with them ; and poisons their minds with prejudice against the Bible and Christianity, which are represented as being in favor of such oppressions. The effects of this prejudice are visible among the colored people of this country, both bond and free. The characteristics of a degraded and injured people prevail, to a greater or less extent, among them. The vices of the slaves and of their masters can not but be communicated to those of them who reside in the Slave States. If the free people of color are, as a class, to be converted, then the great obstacles to their conversion—slavery, and the prejudice against

color growing out of it,—must be surmounted or done away. Even in the Free States this prejudice, by its “negro-pew” or separate seats, and its virtual exclusion of colored youth from common-schools and higher seminaries of learning, prevents their religious instruction and mental improvement, and withdraws their confidence from the means of religious and mental culture.

IV. *Slavery hinders the conversion of the non-slaveholding whites in the Slave States.*

These constitute a large class — a decided majority of the whites in some of the Slave States. The vicious state of society created by slavery can not fail to exert a most pernicious influence upon them; and they are known to partake largely of the characteristic vices of both slaveholders and slaves. With all the cherished contempt and hatred of the colored race that exists among slaveholders, and often in a greater degree, a large portion of this class are degraded by ignorance, vice, and idleness, to a condition in some respects below that of the slaves themselves. They are a less active and a less useful class, are more despised by the slaveholders, and are even despised by the slaves. As labor in Slave States is degrading, and as slaveholders are not employers of free labor, the poorer whites, condemned to idleness, are often driven to the greatest extremities, and many of them subsist by theft and plunder. In these arts they often become the corrupters of the slaves. A large population of them can neither read nor write, and know little or nothing of the truths or the institutions of the Gospel.

Between these and the wealthy planters there is a middle class, comparatively few in numbers, mostly mechanics, some of whom are not slaveholders. Even these are in an unfavorable position, in a moral and intellectual view. Their honorable avocation is disparaged, degraded, and in part superseded by competition with the labor of slave mechanics.

They are dependent on the planters who look down upon all laborers, and they are without adequate means of religious and mental culture. These, in the form of religious and literary institutions, do not flourish in slaveholding communities, and the reason is sufficiently obvious. The bone and muscle of society, the laborers, the agriculturists, constituting one half of the community, are not ranked among human beings but among *things*! Religious and mental instruction are not to be provided for *these*, nor are the responsibilities of providing such instruction supposed to rest upon them. They have neither the ability nor the recognized right of providing them. They are blotted out from the catalogue of men! Add to these the low and degraded whites, and whom have they left to provide the means of religious and mental instruction? Very few, except slaveholders, and these are a very inconsiderable minority of *all* the inhabitants of Slave States. The result is visible even to the hasty traveler. The district school-house and the parish spire are wanting in the landscape. The plantation covers the space of ground occupied by a New-England school-district, or perhaps by a New-England parish. Instead of the farm-houses are miserable negro-huts; or, instead of the little village, are the "negro quarters." Instead of the meeting-house or school-house is the planter's mansion. If the inmates would attend stated Sabbath meetings, they must often travel as far as from one Northern township to another, or to the county seat. The great masses are left without any stated religious meetings at all — without the means of attending them.

If CHRISTIAN institutions are to be established at the South — the Church — the ministry — the hallowed Sabbath — the Sunday-school — the praying circle — the institution of marriage — then the institution of SLAVERY is to be overthrown. If the conversion of the South requires the presence of the former, it requires the absence of the latter.

V. *Slavery corrupts the entire nation, and is a formidable obstacle to the genuine conversion of the American people.*

The nation is one. The people glory in being a *united* people. The people of the Free and Slave States are connected by family affinities, by commercial intercourse, by visits and periodical sojourn, by ecclesiastical and political ties. The national government has become the strong fortress of slavery, and is wielded for its support and emolument. It thus becomes the corrupter of the nation. Aspirants for political elevation must bow down to the oligarchy of slaveholders, and do the bidding of the slave power. National politics control State, county, city, village, and township politics. The lowest as well as the highest offices at the North are obtained by subserviency to slavery, and the desire of office is a ruling passion of the American people. The Fugitive Slave Bill extends SLAVERY in some of its most diabolical features, and "by the authority of Congress," over all the Free States and into every retired nook and corner of them. *No national sin is more all-pervading than this.* The prejudice against color (a practical denial of the unity of the human race as taught in the Bible) has become one of the most potent elements of Northern society. Those who *imbibe* it become practical infidels without suspecting it. Those who *oppose* it, and oppose slavery, are in danger of being driven into the infidelity that rejects the Bible by hearing the Bible appealed to in defense of them. It is not perhaps extravagant to say, that the increasing infidelity of the people of America is to be attributed to the direct and indirect influences of slavery more than to all other causes combined. The position of the Church and ministry, or of a leading portion of them (of which we shall speak presently) greatly adds to the strength of these influences. The free North vies with the slaveholding South in its defenses of slaveholding and apologies for

its continuance. At the ballot-box, in legislative halls, and in courts of justice, the popular vote, the public document, the solemn enactment, the judicial decision, are found to preponderate in favor of slavery and injustice, in preference to equity and freedom.

It may seem paradoxical to say that the American people, northern and southern, are implicated in the support of the slave system, and yet are led to reject the Bible because it is claimed to be the divine charter of slaveholding. But it is one of the apparent paradoxes that embody astonishing truths. Men love to be flattered in their favorite sins, but their consciences and common-sense compel them to reject with loathing the divine claims of a revelation that is represented as giving countenance to their transgressions.

The characteristic vices of slaveholding communities are visible in the entire nation. The same tendency to disparage honest, patient industry, to invent dishonest expedients for living in luxurious idleness; the same skill in perverting legislation and jurisprudence for the support of dishonesty, rather than using them to suppress it; the same tendency to divorce politics from moral obligation, to exalt human enactments above the divine law, and supposed pecuniary interests above moral right; the same hardening of the heart against the claims of humanity, and deadening of the conscience to the dictates of duty; the same spirit of lawlessness, attempting by Lynch law, by mob violence, and even by legislative action, to suppress free discussion, and proscribe the religion of equity and mercy.

So far, therefore, as the conversion of the people of the United States, and their influence upon other nations, are concerned, American slavery presents a formidable obstacle to the conversion of the world.

This will more fully appear when we consider how,

VI. *Slavery corrupts the American churches and ministry, and unfits them for the Christian efforts requisite for the conversion of the world.*

The Rev. James Smylie, A.M., of the Amite Presbytery, Mississippi, in a pamphlet in defense of slaveholding, says :

“ If slavery be a sin, and advertising and apprehending runaway slaves, with a view to restore them to their masters, is a direct violation of the divine law, and if the BUYING, SELLING, and HOLDING a slave, FOR THE SAKE OF GAIN, be a heinous sin and scandal, then verily three fourths of all the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, in eleven States of the Union, are of the devil. They hold, if they do not buy and sell slaves, and (with few exceptions) they hesitate not to apprehend and restore runaway slaves, when in their power.”

And with these Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, the members of the same sects, in the Free States, for the most part, are in full fellowship. And the majority of them utter no remonstrances, and bear no testimony against the practices specified. The few who *do* bear such testimony are stigmatized as “ fanatics ” and disturbers of the peace of the Church. The ablest biblical defenses of slaveholding and of the Fugitive Slave Bill, have been written by leading clergymen at the North, without forfeiture of ministerial standing, or of the fraternity and confidence of their brethren in the ministry and in the churches ; nay, the most distinguished honors and highest positions have been awarded to them ; while others, of at least equal talents, for bearing testimony against slavery, have been deserted, defamed, and left without support. The arrangements of caste are, most commonly, maintained in the churches, and in the seminaries presided over by leading clergymen. The leading religious periodicals of the country are either silent, or on the side of the oppressor. The Bible, and Tract, and Missionary Societies,

for the most part, (and with exception of new societies organized by abolitionists,) maintain a similar position. And the support of slavery and caste at the ballot-box, in the state and national legislatures, and in courts of law, is the support given them by the most honored and influential lay members of the churches, for which they are not reprov'd, but defended and applauded in fulsome eulogies, by the leading clergy.

We are now prepared to see how and why

VII. *American Slavery interposes a formidable obstacle to the conversion of the world.*

By its known and ascertained effects in our own country, we can readily infer what would be the effects of slavery elsewhere. If it imbrutes and heathenizes its victims here, it would do the same in other countries. If it demoralizes the slaveholders here, it would do the same elsewhere. If it interposes obstacles to the conversion of the non-slaveholding whites of the South, and of the American people in general, then its influence would be of a similar character wherever it should exist. If it corrupts the American churches and paralyzes the American ministry, it would corrupt the churches and cripple the ministry of any other country who should come under its influence.

No churches or ministry can be expected to propagate a purer religion abroad than that which they teach and exemplify at home. It could be no great marvel if slaveholding missionaries from America (and such are sometimes sent to the heathen) should be active in introducing slavery wherever they might reside. Their habits would render it exceedingly convenient for them to do so. But it *would* be a very great marvel if *any* American missionaries, who are in fellowship with slaveholders, who are sustained in part by them, and who hold the sentiments of the missionary boards who employ them, (that slaveholding ought to be no bar to church

fellowship,) should exert any effective influence against chattel slavery, or against any other forms of oppression, in heathen lands. How could they do so without condemning themselves, and those who sustain and employ them? It is well known that our American missionaries to the Cherokees and Choctaws have done nothing to prevent the introduction of slavery among them, but have, in some instances, encouraged slaveholding by their example, in the hiring of slave labor.

But suppose the American missionaries would not actually carry "the peculiar institution" along with them, to the heathen. They must nevertheless come to the heathen from a slaveholding country, a country nominally Christian. This, alone, would be sufficient to excite the fears of barbarous nations, who have suffered so much from the injustice of professed Christians. But when they are known to come not only from a slaveholding country, but from the bosom of slaveholding churches, or from ecclesiastical bodies and missionary boards in close fellowship with them, the embarrassment must be immeasurably increased. This is no imaginary or merely supposed case. Our missionaries abroad have expressed their fears that the astounding facts would precede them and bar up their way. And in some instances the alarm has actually been raised among the heathen, that the missionaries intended to enslave them. The facts of American slavery can not be concealed from them. The morality or the policy of *attempting* a concealment can hardly be doubtful.

No missionaries from this country, it may be presumed, would be willing to go to the heathen, literally, with the Bible in one hand and a slave-whip in the other, giving their auditors to understand that the former was the charter of the latter. But why not, if they honestly believe this to be the fact of the case? Why not, but because they intuitively

know that such a course would awaken the deep disgust of the heathen? Why not, unless it be a self-evident truth that a slaveholding religion is an outrage upon the moral sense of all men? Why not, but because, in other words, they *know* that American slaveholding is an obstacle to the reception of the Gospel by the heathen?

But this is by no means the strongest or clearest light that may be thrown upon the proposition we are maintaining. Let it be supposed that this obstacle is overcome — nay, that it is no obstacle at all — that, so far from being repulsive and terrific, the license of American Christianity to hold slaves should prove to be the attractive passport of the missionary to tribes of slaveholding heathen. What do we witness, then? A Christianity that reproves not the heathen, that calls them not to repentance, for their most heaven-daring wickedness! A Christianity that leaves them yet in their sins! Would this be the conversion of the heathen to Christ? Assuredly it would not. The conversion of the world to a pro-slavery religion, under the garb of Christianity, would be a grand triumph of the adversary of souls.

The first fruits of *such* a missionary enterprise are already beginning to ripen around us. The Choctaws and the Cherokees, as Christianized heathen tribes, are enrolled among the trophies of our "American Board." But the type of their Christianity and civilization is revealed in their slave codes. Having recently received the Bible, and the education necessary to the use of it, we see them forbidding their slaves to receive and read the Bible! Scarcely are they taught to honor Christian marriage and to institute Christian families, when behold, they incorporate into their community an "institution" that tramples the marriage and family institutions under foot! Just beginning to claim the dignity of Christian freemen, we see them enacting statutes for enslaving free people of color! Though far from being themselves

white, we see them establishing caste founded on *complexion*! Just rising from a depressed condition themselves, we find them proscribing, as a crime, the act of eating with the negro race, or holding free, social, and Christian intercourse with them!* And no earnest remonstrances against all this are heard from the churches and ministry approving the course of the "American Board!" We press the inquiry whether *such* a conversion of the heathen would be their conversion to *Christ*? Whether *such* a "conversion of the world" would be its conversion to God? Whether *such* a church, and ministry and missionary boards are in a position to coöperate with the Christians of other countries, in the enterprise of "*converting the world*?" Whether Christians of other countries can *join with them* in such an enterprise, without inflicting an injury upon their own purity and influence?

Yet, apart from the influences which American slavery exerts upon them, the American churches and ministry *would* occupy (as they now *think* they do) a position admirably adapted to qualify them for missionary labor. Emancipated from the control and patronage of the state, from the exactions and dictation of a state church, sustained by voluntary self-support, free to think and to act, they *might* become what they claim and profess to be, the model churches and ministry of Christendom, destined to give their own impress upon a renovated world. They have excited high hopes. They have made high professions. They have been hailed as the pioneers and exemplars of civil and religious freedom; the propagators of the purest phase of evangelical religion, throwing new light on disputed points of theology, excelling in the methods of promoting religious revivals, taking the lead of European churches in their applications of Christian

* See Goodell's "American Slave Code," Appendix, pp. 417-22.

doctrine to Christian ethics, reformations from intemperance, enterprises for relieving human wretchedness. Alas! that all this should have been more than neutralized by their guilty connection with human chattelhood! What a sad demonstration of the influence of American slavery, in retarding the conversion of the world! Who can tell or imagine the progress that *might* have been made in the process of the world's conversion, had it not been for this cause?

How can it be otherwise with the American churches, and ministry, and missionary boards, till they have purged themselves from this pollution? Until then, how can they beneficially approach the heathen? How are they to give Bibles to all the nations, while consenting to the withholding of Bibles at home? How convince Catholics that *their* church is proved anti-Christian by this practice, while they hold fellowship with *Protestant* churches that do the same thing? How teach Christian marriage abroad, while they consent to its abrogation at home? How call the heathen to repentance for their oppressions, their barbarity, their injustice, their violations of human rights, their spirit and their usages of caste, their concubinage, impurity, and lust, while they quietly and complacently sit down at the communion table with the same sins at home?

In a retrospect of the whole subject, let every Christian labor and pray for the abolition of American slavery as essential to the conversion of the world.

FACTS TO BE PONDERED.

A MISSIONARY in the East, in a letter published in the *New-York Independent*, writes, "We dare not tell these Nestorians that such an institution (as slavery) exists in 'free, happy America.' If we should, they would not fail to charge us, as Mar Yohannan did, when visiting America, with the grossest inconsistency."

REV. JUSTIN PERKINS, D.D., a missionary of the American Board, in a sermon preached at Oroomiah, in Persia, says: "I hold that American slavery is the greatest human obstacle to the spread and triumph of the Gospel that exists at the present period."

"THE AMERICAN BOARD" in a recent report, says: "*The Choctaws have a good government.* They have a written constitution, with a declaration of rights, which embodies the liberty of the press, trial by jury, the rights of conscience, *proper safeguards of person and property*, the equality of Christian denominations, and every great principle of civil and religious freedom." See of this "*good government*:" "If any citizen of the United States, acting as a MISSIONARY OR PREACHER, or whatever his occupation may be, is found to take an active part in favoring the principles and notions of the most fatal and destructive doctrines of the abolitionists, he shall be compelled to leave the nation, and for ever stay out of it.* Be it farther enacted that teaching slaves how to read, to write, or to sing in meeting-houses, or schools, or in any open place, without consent of the owner, or allowing them to sit at table with him, shall be sufficient grounds to convict persons of favoring the principles and notions of abolitionists."† Another law of this "good government," requires "free negroes, unconnected with Choctaw or Chickasaw blood," to "leave the nation," or be "seized and sold to the highest bidder, for life." Concealing a free negro, to evade this provision, is punished with a fine of "\$250 to \$500, or if unable to pay the fine, to receive fifty lashes on the bare back."‡ By another law, "any free negro presuming to enter and remain in the nation, to receive an hundred lashes on the bare back, and to forfeit all the property he may possess."§

* Letters of Hon. Wm. Jay. p. 14.

† American Slave Code. p. 420.

‡ American Slave Code. p. 421.

§ Letters Hon. Wm. Jay. p. 15.

The report of the American Board tells us that "the Cherokees have an *excellent government*; the usual safeguards for person, property, the rights of conscience, &c., are provided."—"This excellent government deprives of all rights of citizenship, every child of a *red* man by a black or yellow wife, declares *void* every marriage of the kind, and subjects the parties to *scourging*! Whoever teaches a slave, or any free negro not of Cherokee blood, to read or write, is to be fined from \$100 to \$500."*

SENATOR DOUGLAS, in his speech on the Nebraska bill, stated that a missionary from Boston, in that territory, holds a slave purchased in Missouri, to help his sick wife. This missionary is presumed to be Mr. Johnson, missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, who is said in the *New-York Times*, of Feb. 27, to be a delegate in Congress from Nebraska.

"THE AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY" "is said to have five missionaries, who are pastors of churches in slave States, in some of which slaveholders are freely admitted, and fellow-shipped as Christians in good and regular standing."

An. Rep. Am. & For. A. S. Soc., p. 117

"THE GENERAL BOARD OF BAPTIST MISSIONS" employed two slaveholding missionaries, Mr. Bushyhead among the Cherokees, and Mr. Davenport in Siam. Facts for Baptist Churches, pp. 102-117.

"THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY" also employed slaveholding missionaries. Eld. Duncan Dunbar stated publicly at a meeting in Philadelphia, that *twenty-six slaveholders* had been employed by the Board. Ib. p. 65.

THE BAPTIST MISSION CHURCHES among the Choctaws and Cherokees allowed slaveholding, and the fact has been frequently alluded to, in meetings of the "American Board," as being in harmony with its own course. Hist. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. p. 505.

"THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY UNION," in continuation of the policy commenced before its organization, has maintained slaveholding in its Indian Missions.

Facts for Baptist Churches, p. 216.

* Letters Hon. Wm. Jay. p. 15.